

Survival Game

Logbook 2024.06.25: Korfu-Dubrovnik

Kicking off at about noon time from Gouvia Marina. There is some southerly wind forecast. However, that is very weak with some 5 knots. So need to motor most of the way. First through the channel between Corfu and Albania, the Kykera Norther straight, and than turn left towards the Canale d'Otranto. This Canale was a stone in my guts the last weeks. There is wind either north or south. And that is typically a very strong wind. The long fetch over the Adriatic creates high waves. So I am not totally unhappy that there was only little wind. However, still the waves are quite choppy, that doesn't make it a pleasant ride. Rounding the corner at Capo Linguetta in the morning hours, still dark and putting course towards Dubrovnik, that is another 130 nm.

Adjusting the course a little further east towards the middle section of Montenegro, with the wind forecast from south and further towards Albania. Sunny and hot it is during the day. Wind picked up to some 15 knots straight from the rear. That makes it a little difficult with the sails, still much better than the wind from front.

Dark clouds come up, somewhat scary as I am far off land and safety. Without access to internet or weather forecast, weather movements and wind predictions are not there. That situation kept me alert some 5, 6 hours until the evening.

The weather cleared up and made a very nice sunset, which tricked me somewhat into a false hope for a quiet night. Just before midnight, some 60 miles towards Montenegro, the sky went very dark. Clouds piled up. A not comforting situation. First lightning at the horizon in the higher atmospheres. That is not where I like to go, even so Montenegro would offer protective anchorage. Keeping some 50 miles distance to shore, changing course and going further towards north and Dubrovnik. More clouds and significant lighting near the coast line.

I thought; "Well, those are high cumulus clouds and the lighting is high up and will likely not come down".

At about 1 am, the complete coastline was a huge light show. No other vessel on the water anywhere. I feel very alone, hoping the weather doesn't move to my direction. Not good to be on the open sea with a 14m aluminum mast as a lightning attraction. Speeding towards Dubrovnik, where I think it would be safe. Clouds got more dense. The wind picked up- Waves are 2, 3 m high now. I am totally scared. Counting for the worse, I put essential belongings into waterproof bags (passport, phone, etc) and another bag filled with survival things (water, small solar panel, signal flares, ...). Both I attach to a spare life west.

At the bow, having a better look where to go; Are there areas with less lighting, are there shore lights visible, which direction does the weather move? Splish splash, some 5 dolphins circled the Jolie Fleur. That was adding to my adrenaline level. Like white torpedoes in the water, fast and playful. With the lighting illuminating the surroundings for milliseconds. Surrealistic. And scary.

Completely spooky. I took the Dolphins as a hint. Changed course back to the open sea towards the eastern Italian coast, where I see areas with stars, means no clouds, means no lightning. The lightning on the Croatian shore intensified. Lightning now also hitting to land and water. I estimate the clouds path and try to circle those as best as possible. Another splash added to my tension. A Dolphin just jumped out of a wave and smashed back into the black sea a couple of times. Like saying; I am happy, you are now on the right track.

At dawn, surroundings got more visible. Rain coming out of clouds over Mijet. That was the target destination now. Waves are high, carrying the energy from the overnight thunderstorms that are still ongoing near shore. Not I got again some 5G connection. The weather is moving towards mainland Croatia, away from me. I am tired. It is now some 200

miles cruising, adrenaline is wearing off. Heading for the Dubrovnik Marina.

Before mooring I got to refill Diesel. The patrol station is just left to the Marina. I am tired. Approaching the docking, somewhat the typical behavior of the Jolie Fleur is slightly different. Might be the wind or so, I thought. We nicely docked to the patrol station and go to fill in diesel. The pump doesn't work, I need to shift the boat to another pump, like a boats lengths revers. No need to use the motor, so I just untie and pull her back. Strangely the bow starts to turn away from the pier. I try to hold her, but no chance. She is really pulling hard and I have to let go. The rear is luckily still close to the pier and I take a leap back onto the boat. Start the engine and get back control. Only now I realize that the patrol station is located in a river, that provides a current which made the boat behave in a way that wasn't expected. That adventure nearly ended in a disaster.

After mooring at about noon time, I immediately fall asleep. In the evening I got some energy back and took the bus to Dubrovnik old town and enjoyed a nice dinner with some beers. Survival games, the last 24 hours!

48h sailing, 221 nm

Wind 0-25 kn,SE







